

Kingdom of God vs. the Kingdom of Man: Essay #1—Definition of the Kingdom of God

RECAP

As stated in the introduction, **my goal** for this series of essays and book reviews is to demonstrate and explain the emotional and intellectual tension within and among many people in the United States of America (USA). What we are experiencing are storms waging between one segment's growing faith in the current and future reality of the kingdom of God, versus the majority's confusion and frustration about current and future developments in the world's socio-economic-political environment, which we shall call the kingdom of man. Many observers have described the current social and political environment as a time of extreme polarization. (Klein, 2020).

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In our introduction I suggested that to understand our main thesis we would need to define the meaning, the character, and the significance of the Kingdom of God. To do so, I will call on two Christian philosophers—Dr. Henry Stob and Dr. Dallas Willard-- men who thrived in the academic world and have now “passed on” to a much better life, but whose work and contributions will live on, and for very good reasons. I will also turn to a Christian sociologist, Dr. Donald Kraybill. In this essay's final section I will describe how the business executive and former World Vision President Richard Stearns contributes to our understanding of the Kingdom of God.

Dr. Henry Stob is the first to receive our attention. I was privileged to be a student in two of his classes in 1970 to 1971 at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, MI. Dr. Stob's lectures truly helped me to transition from the secular training of my undergraduate days to a Bible-based point of view. Dr. Stob set forth a word picture of the Kingdom of God by describing it as “**the active and effective rule of God in Jesus Christ over all things in all places toward the gracious ends he has set.**” (1978, p. 67) To thoroughly comprehend what Dr. Stob believes to be the Biblical description of the Kingdom of God, we shall follow him point by point and then summarize the key relevant Scripture passages that illustrate Dr. Stob's picture and point of view. Finally, we will include a more thorough description of the Biblical account of the Kingdom of God as an appendix to this essay.

Within my presentation of Dr. Stob's ten defining points, I will include occasional clarifying statements from Donald Kraybill's popular book from the 1970s, *The Upside-Down Kingdom*. Kraybill is my contemporary—born in 1946, and I in 1948—and he comes from the Anabaptist tradition, while Dr. Stob is solidly in the Reformed-Calvinist tradition, which is also the perspective that shaped my first 21 years of life. We shall see how descriptions from Dr. Stob the Christian philosopher and Dr. Kraybill the Christian sociologist will help us understand what God through the Holy Spirit teaches us about the Kingdom of God.

Defining Point #1: The Kingdom of God is a “**community of persons** animated by the Spirit of God” and “set down in an environment completely serviceable to righteousness, peace, truth, and every other value.” (1978, 67) According to Kraybill, the Kingdom of God is “a group of persons whose hearts and relationships are in subordination to the reign of God.” (1978, 26)

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Defining Point #2: “His **present** kingdom is his faithful and invisible ordering of things toward the fulfillment of that fixed and gracious intention. (1978, 67) Per Kraybill, “the kingdom is present whenever women and men submit themselves to God’s reign in their life.” (1978, 25)

Defining Point #3: “His **future** Kingdom will be that state, situation, or condition in which that intention is actualized, and when he in company of his children will be all in all.” (1978, 67)

Defining Point #4: “There is **nothing we can do** to evoke or hinder the Kingdom of God. All we can do is recognize it as a fact and thankfully accept it as a gift—or remain blind and unbelieving and fall under its judgment....God’s love and mercy flow unprovoked and invincibly from his free and sovereign will.” (1978, 67)

Defining Point #5: We can participate in the Kingdom of God. We can submit to it, reap its benefits, witness, reflect, and embody it. “We can experience, absorb, and exert its power and so act redemptively in imitation of and cooperation with our Lord. **THIS, IN FACT, IS THE CHRISTIAN CALLING.**” (emphasis mine, NDH). (1978, 67-- 68) According to Kraybill, “we can discover the shape and form of His Kingdom by carefully studying the life and teachings of Jesus.” Following the example of Jesus, says Kraybill, results in the “upside down kingdom”—the values of the Kingdom of God are exactly opposite the values of the world. (1978, 27)

Defining Point #6: Christians are “called to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom in order that others may also fall under its beneficent sway. (1978, 68)

Defining Point #7: Although missionary work is central, Christians should also “go out into the public arena in order with disciplined vision and balanced judgment to work upon socio-political structures and institutions.” However, it is to be noted that “the Kingdom will not be established that way, but signs and tokens of its presence will thereby be set up and its end will be thereby served.” (1978, 68)

Defining Point #8: The Kingdom is operative “wherever the Spirit blows, wherever the Word is taught or preached, and wherever Christ’s healing ministry is undertaken, and in the latter case whether it is done in his name or not.” (1978, 68) Per Kraybill, “we are informed about the nature and way of the kingdom by both the word and behavior of Jesus of Nazareth.” (1978, 27)

Here Dr. Stob makes an astonishing observation, one which to which we will return as we explore and discuss our main thesis in future essays and book reviews with regard to the tensions people experience both within the Kingdom of God and in the interactions between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of man, particularly as the tension emerges in politics. Dr. Stob makes this claim: “God demands and expects the service of his own children, but he is not bound to this, and those who do not know him, or do not know him yet, are often made serviceable, beyond their willing or knowing, to the ends of his Kingdom. When such people are discovered by Christians, they must be joined and helped, or alternatively recruited, whatever their open or hidden profession.” (1978, 68)

Defining Point #9: The Kingdom of God is universal or worldwide in character. First, “it embraces in its membership men of every epoch, tongue, race, color or condition....It overlaps

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all national boundaries. The conditions are not historical or biological, but exclusively supernatural, namely grace and faith. ONE NEED BUT BELIEVE TO GET IN. (emphasis mine, NDH).

Second, the Kingdom of God is worldwide in the sense “that it calls into exercise all the faculties of men...It uses as instruments every single gift and talent man possesses. The Kingdom takes control of the entire being.” (1978, 68)

Defining Point #10: “The Kingdom of God is worldwide, finally, in the sense that it embraces the whole of human society.” This is the defining point where Dr. Stob explains the tension that we constantly feel and face between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of man. Pointing to Augustine, Dr. Stob reminds us that there are two kingdoms, two commonwealths, two cities—the City of God, and the City of the World.” Each kingdom wants to be worldwide; each intends to dominate the other. (1978, 69)

The Kingdom of God in the Scriptures

I hope that the Scripture references linked to Dr. Stob’s ten defining points will be helpful to my readers in understanding God’s Kingdom. However, the description of these references in Table 2 in the appendix to this essay might be considered by many of us as TMI—Too Much Information. Therefore, a brief review of what God through the Holy Spirit in Scripture is showing, teaching and guiding us with regard to his kingdom will be helpful.

First, Jesus Christ gives us an encouraging and clear call to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness (Matthew 6:33). Jesus promised that if we have the Kingdom of God as our top priority, all the other things we worry about will be taken care of by our heavenly Father. (See Point #5 above).

Second, Jesus told his disciples that not everyone will understand the secrets of the Kingdom of God. That is why he spoke in parables. (Matthew 13:11; see Point # 8) Then Jesus explained his parable of the Sower and the Seed. This parable has always been my favorite. I loved it as a youngster, and now as an adult I view this parable as crucial to understanding God’s message of hope with regard to the Kingdom of God. Jesus tells us that the seed is the “message about the kingdom.” There are four possible responses to this message. **One response**, and this one seems to be most characteristic in the world today, is to reject the message. A **second response** is to accept it, perhaps in one’s youth, but to reject it relatively early in one’s Christian experience. The cause for turning away from the message early could be troubles or peer pressure or in some parts of the world, it could be persecution.

The **third response** takes place in the world of thorns, where the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the message of the kingdom and make the one-time believers unfruitful. Painfully we are aware of this possibility, as we examine our own life experiences and observe the life styles of those we know and love.

Finally, there is the response to the message that God truly loves and expects. That is the response that comes from the “good soil.” This is the response from the person “who hears the

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word and understands it,” and as a result produces a crop far greater than the message itself. (Matthew 13:41; see Point #5)

The parables that follow in Matthew 13 help us to further understand the Kingdom of God. The Parable of the Weeds helps us to comprehend the present (Point #2) and the future (Point #3) as well as the conflicts we now face (Point #10). Certainly those of us who want to be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, thereby being fruitful in today’s world, are also distracted and disturbed by the “weeds” all around us. Nevertheless, we can live in hope based on the promise from Jesus Christ: wait until the harvest, when the weeds will be burned and the wheat will be gathered. (Matthew 13:30; see Point #3) Jesus promised that “the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.” (Matthew 13:43) And just to be clear, Jesus tells us that God’s messengers, his angels, at the end of the age “will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.” (Matthew 13:41; see Point #10)

If we stay focused on the message in the Bible concerning the Kingdom of God, we will have the knowledge of the following essential truths:

1. We enter the Kingdom of God by being born again. (John 3:3, see Point #5) To be clear, per Jesus, “no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.” (John 3:5)
2. The outcome of the seed falling on the good soil is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, as evident in the community of persons animated by the Spirit of God. (Point #1)
3. This fruit is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Galatians 5:23)
4. The Kingdom of God must be our first priority. (Matthew 6:33 and Luke 12:31)

Dr. Dallas Willard, Knowledge, and the Kingdom of God

Dr. Dallas Willard’s approach to the Kingdom of God is very similar to Dr. Stob’s. Dr. Willard, was the author of many great books, including *Knowing Christ Today*. Having recently passed away, Dr. Dallas Willard was a bestselling author and professor at the University of Southern California’s School of Philosophy. Dr. Willard says that his hope and purpose for this particular book is “to enable intellectually serious people, Christian or not, to understand the indispensable role of knowledge in faith and life.” (p.7) In doing so he spells out the crucial role of the Kingdom of God.

Typically college professors and instructors will present students with “knowledge” and opinions which they proudly present as factual, true, and based on reality. They typically minimize belief and faith. One of Dr. Willard’s key points is that Christians should not allow someone to minimize our belief and faith. In fact, we should insist, in a very humble but confident way, that our faith and belief is based on knowledge. This knowledge, he says, involves “truth secured by experience, method, and evidence that is generally available.” (p. 17) This knowledge includes our knowledge of the Kingdom of God. Dr. Willard provides us with four points that he thinks are essential to our knowledge of the Kingdom of God.

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1. Existence of a personal God;
2. God's intervention and direction in human affairs;
3. The spiritual nature of human beings;
4. The fundamental reliability of the Bible and the central teachings of the church. (p.9)

On the other hand, says Dr. Willard, secularism, which is the predominant world view in higher education, holds that all four points “have been discovered to be false or without credible evidence, that Christianity has been “found out,” and that Christianity is a set of humanly contrived myths and traditions.” (p. 9) Dr. Willard has dedicated his life to the study of philosophy and he has done so in the setting of secular higher education. Therefore, we can accept with some confidence when he tells us that the university has no responsible and authoritative answers to life's four questions:

1. What is real?
2. What is well-being?
3. Who is really a good person?
4. How does one become a really good person?

Dr. Willard observed that “modernity has, after centuries of struggle, found **no credible answers** to the basic questions of life.” He adds that “universities, our primary institutions of research, simply have no intellectually responsible responses to those questions.” (p. 56) Dr. Willard also points out that there are three basic worldviews that try to answer these questions. A world view, he says, “consists of the most general and basic assumptions about what is real and what is good—including assumptions about who we are and what we should do.” (p. 43). The three basic world views are 1) the theistic story, 2) the Nirvana story (i.e. Buddhism and the New Age movement), and 3) the naturalist story (i.e. secularism).” (p. 61)

The exciting, good news is that the world view in which many of us have been trained by our parents, the world view that is also promoted by many of our grandparents, is the worldview that Jesus Christ has given us. This world view is also the outlook for new Christians, those who were not raised up in Christian homes. Therefore, we have knowledge; this is wonderful and true! We should not let anyone dislodge us from this truth. Therefore, we can approach these four basic questions with the answers that Jesus Christ gives us. We can do so confidently. These questions and answers are described in the table below.

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TABLE 1 : Dallas Willard and the Answers to Four Basic Questions	
BASIC QUESTION	ANSWERS FROM JESUS CHRIST:
1. What is real? What is reality?	God and His Kingdom (p. 50). The “kingdom of God is God reigning.” “If, at the invitation of Jesus, we place ourselves by belief and commitment under the kingdom of God, then we will be under its care and can come to know its reality.” (p. 51)
2. Who is well-off, blessed?	“Anyone who is alive in the kingdom of God.” ...That is, “anyone who is interactively engaged with God and the various dynamic dimensions of his reigning.” ...“Such engagement with God is an eternal living, an eternal life.” (p. 51)
3. Who is really a good person?	“A really good person, as Jesus teaches, is anyone who is pervaded with love: love for the God who ‘first loved us’ and who in his Son taught us what love is (I John 4:9—11).” (p. 53)
4. How do you become a really good person?	“You place your confidence in Jesus Christ and become his student or apprentice in kingdom living.” (p. 53)

The Kingdom of Man as Either the Magic Kingdom or the Tragic Kingdom

For a third approach to understanding the Kingdom of God there is the compelling analysis that the former president of World Vision offers us. Richard Stearns, described three kingdoms—the Magic Kingdom, the Tragic Kingdom, and the Kingdom of God. (Stearns, 2013) In doing so, he divided the kingdom of man into two parts. One is the Magic Kingdom, which is the setting where many evangelical Christians now live, particularly in the nations of Northern America or Europe, and countries such as Australia and other well-developed nations. Their neighborhoods could be in the suburbs, gated communities, high rise apartments with doormen, or ranches and large estates in the rural countryside. This Magic Kingdom is very much like Florida’s Disney World, where everything seems to be perfect and the kingdom dwellers and visitors are happy, content, and well-fed, surrounded by the excitement of rides, beautiful landscapes, and lively music. It is a world of make-believe.

The Tragic Kingdom is where most of the world’s humanity lives. In the less developed world, economically speaking, The Tragic Kingdom is marked by poverty and pain, where 75% of the people on our planet survive on less than ten dollars a day. Stearns reminds Americans that “an income of just thirteen thousand dollars places you in the top 10 percent” of the world’s income profile. (Stearns, 2013, 49) War, death, and destruction define some parts of the Tragic Kingdom, such as what we have seen through glimpses on the nightly news regarding Syria. In the United States many Christians live in the Magic Kingdom of material abundance, while at the same time there are inhabitants of the Tragic Kingdom living a stone’s throw away in blocks, neighborhoods, or country roads where people are fighting to survive, struggling in poverty and fighting the onslaught of drugs and what seems to be hopelessness.

Richard Stearns gives us a challenge to leave the comfort and pleasures of the Magic Kingdom. He also offers the inhabitants of the Tragic Kingdom a way out. The plan to exit is the Kingdom

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of God. Stearns tells us that “Jesus was clear.” Stearns points to the bold claims of Scripture: Jesus “called us to go into the world and change it by proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God, modeling a different vision of community, and inviting others to join it.” (p. 53) Stearns observes that “we have failed to obey Christ’s commands to live radically different lives, to build and establish the kingdom of God, to make disciples of all nations, and to demonstrate His love to a hurting world.” (2009, 54)

Today’s temptation for Christians is to be distracted in giving our full allegiance to the Kingdom of God. Instead, we engage ourselves to a much greater extent to the kingdom of man, particularly as it relates to the world of politics. Once we enter that world, be it as participants, observers, or partisan fans of one political party or another, we find that we can easily be caught in an atmosphere of fear and anxiety, and even of hate and bitterness. Chuck Colson, who certainly knows the political world through his use of unlawful methods during the Nixon Administration, has reminded us that the kingdom of man and the Kingdom of God are in conflict. He observed that “the church, while not the Kingdom of God, is to live out the values of the Kingdom of God in the world, resisting the ever-present temptation to usher in the Kingdom of God by political means.” (1987, 93)

In his first book, Stearns describes the preferred and God-directed involvement of all Christians in the Kingdom of God according to the following terms:

- “... I have also attempted to make clear from Scripture that the whole gospel—the very revolution Jesus intended as His kingdom unfolded ‘in earth as it is in heaven’—has been entrusted to us, those who claim to follow Christ.”
- “Jesus seeks a new world order in which this whole gospel, hallmarked by compassion, justice, and proclamation of the good news, becomes a reality, first in our hearts and minds, and then in the wider world through our influence.”
- “This is not a far-off and distant kingdom to be experienced only in the afterlife. Christ’s vision was of a redeemed world order populated by redeemed people—NOW.”
- “To accomplish this, we are to be salt and light in a dark and fallen world, the ‘yeast’ that leavens the whole loaf of bread (the whole of society). We are the ones God has called to be His Church. It’s up to us. We are to be the change.”
- “But a changed world requires change agents, and change agents are people who have first been changed themselves.” (Stearns, 2009, 243)

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Updated April 26, 2021

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**Table 2: RELEVANT PASSAGES THAT DESCRIBE THE KINGDOM OF GOD
(APPENDIX)**

Defining Point #/ Key Words	Text from Scripture....Key phrases	Citations from Scripture
<p>#1: Community of persons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healing of the sick • Repentance • Meeting each other's needs • Doing good works • Persecuted • Representing Christ • Exercise humility • Forgiving each other 	<p>Jesus: “When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’”</p>	<p>Luke 10:8-9</p>
	<p>“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and</p>	<p>Matthew 9:35 (Also see 9:36-38 in #6 below.)</p>
	<p>Jesus: “...the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John (the Baptist) came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe.”</p>	<p>Matthew 21: 31b-32</p>
	<p>“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.”</p>	<p>Acts 2:42-45</p>
	<p>Paul: “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us do .”</p>	<p>Ephesians 2:10</p>
	<p>“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”</p>	<p>Matthew 5:10</p>
	<p>Peter: “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Jesus: “...on this rock I will build my church...I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven...”</p>	<p>Matthew 16:16--17</p>
	<p>“...whoever humbles himself like a little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (v. 4)</p>	<p>Matthew 18:1--4</p>
	<p>In Jesus’s parable of the unforgiving servant, Jesus</p>	<p>Matthew 18:22--</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God’s approach to fair treatment • Be a servant • Serving the least of these 	tells us that in the kingdom of heaven, the Lord expects us to forgive our brother from our heart.	35
	The kingdom of heaven is like the landowner who hired men at different times of the day but paid them equally. “So the last will be first and the first will be last.” (v. 16)	Matthew 20:1--16
	Jesus in response to the request of the mother of the Zebedee brothers (James and John) for them to have a special place in Christ’s kingdom: “...whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant...” (v. 26)	Matthew 20: 20--28
	Jesus , telling the parable of the sheep and the goats, tells us: “...whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” (v. 40)	Matthew 25: 31--36
<p>#2: God’s Kingdom is PRESENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through all generations • Don’t look back...stay focused • Wheat and weeds to grow alongside • The kingdom is advancing • The kingdom is growing 	“an everlasting kingdom”... endures through all generations”	Psalm 45:13
	When plowing a field, don’t look back, in order to be “fit for service in the kingdom of God.”...	Luke 9:62
	“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed...his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat.” Per the owner: “Let both grow together until the harvest.”	Matthew 13: 24--30
	“From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing...” (v. 12)	Matthew 11: 7-19
	“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed... when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants...”	Matthew 13:31--32
<p>#3: God’s Kingdom is FUTURE</p>	“...the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed.”	Daniel 2:44
		Matthew 16:28

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus will return 	<p>Jesus: "...some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming to his kingdom."</p>	<p>Also: Mark 9:1</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus describes his future kingdom 	<p>Jesus to his disciples: "But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."</p>	<p>Luke 22:27--30</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the overcomer 	<p>"They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords, King of kings."</p>	<p>Revelation 17:14</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must watch & wait 	<p>The Parable of the 10 Virgins tells the story of the 5 foolish virgins who were not ready for the arrival of the bridegroom. "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour." (v. 13)</p>	<p>Matthew 25: 1--13</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sin will be weeded out of Christ's kingdom 	<p>"As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil."</p>	<p>Matthew 13:40-41</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The righteous will be rewarded 	<p>"Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father."</p>	<p>Matthew 13:43</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation to take place 	<p>The Parable of the Net: "...The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous..." (v. 49)</p>	<p>Matthew 13:47-50</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus will give rewards 	<p>Jesus: "For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done."</p>	<p>Matthew 16:27</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our future city 	<p>"For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come."</p>	<p>Hebrews 13:14</p>
<p>#4: God's Kingdom is an outcome of his grace & mercy. It is not a result of</p>	<p>James: "Has God chosen those who are poor in the</p>	<p>James 2:5</p>

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<p>human effort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God chose the poor • The kingdom will last forever • The kingdom is not of this world • God sanctifies believers • Jesus drove out demons • God rules his kingdom 	<p>eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him.”</p>	
	<p>What God says about the Son: “Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.”</p>	<p>Hebrews 1:8</p>
	<p>Jesus to Pilate: “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.”</p>	<p>John 18:36</p>
	<p>Paul: “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”</p>	<p>I Thessalonians 5:23</p>
	<p>Jesus: “But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”</p>	<p>Matthew 12:28</p>
	<p>“The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.”</p>	<p>Psalms 103:19</p>
<p>#5: Our CALLING: Participate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top priority • Role of wisdom & music • Serving the hungry, strangers & the sick • Must be born again • Be born of water & the Spirit 	<p>“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and these things will be given to you as well.”</p>	<p>Matthew 6:33 Luke 12:29-30</p>
	<p>“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”</p>	<p>Colossians 3:16</p>
	<p>Jesus speaking about the future: “...take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you...For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was a stranger and you invited me in...I was sick and you looked after me...”</p>	<p>Matthew 25:31--36</p>
	<p>Jesus: “...no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”</p>	<p>John 3:3</p>
	<p>Jesus: “...no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.”</p>	<p>John 3:5</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The kingdom as our chief passion • The kingdom is a challenge for the rich 	<p>Kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”</p>	Matthew 13:44
	<p>Kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. “When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”</p>	Matthew 13:45
	<p>Jesus: “...it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”</p>	Matthew 19:23-24
<p>#6: We are to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus’s call for workers • Our priority: Proclaim the Kingdom • Philip preached the Kingdom • Paul preached the kingdom 	<p>Jesus: “...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”</p>	Matthew 28:19-20
	<p>Jesus: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”</p>	Matthew 9:36-37
	<p>Jesus: “Let the dead bury the dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”</p>	Luke 9:60
	<p>“But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”</p>	Acts 8:12
	<p>“Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God.”</p>	Acts 19:8
	<p>Paul: “From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.”</p>	Acts 28:23b
	<p>“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.”</p>	Psalms 89:14
<p>#7: Work on socio-political structures with disciplined vision and balanced judgment.</p>	<p>Jesus: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour</p>	Matthew 13:33

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	until it worked all through the dough.”	
	“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom”	Psalm 45:6
	“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.”	Psalm 89:14
	Jesus: “You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of this world... In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they might see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”	Matthew 5:13-16
#8: Those who do not know Christ are often made serviceable to the ends of his Kingdom	Jesus to the disciples: “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them” (i.e. people in the kingdom of man, NDH).	Matthew 11: 11-17 Also: Deut. 29:4, Jer. 5:21, Exec. 12:12, Isaiah 6:9-10
	John: “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord.”	Revelation 11:15
	David: “The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. All you have made will praise you, O Lord; your saints will extol you. They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.”	Psalm 145:9--12
#9: The Kingdom of God is worldwide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be preached to the whole world • Our challenge: Each person to maximize our talents 	Jesus: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached to the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” (v. 21)	Matthew 24:14-30
	Parable of the Talents: The master’s first response: “You have been faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things.” The lesson to be learned: Use all of my gifts and talents for God’s kingdom.	Matthew 25:14-30
#10: The Kingdom of God is in conflict with the kingdom of	Paul: “...you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom	Ephesians 2: 1--7

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<p>man</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways of the world 	<p>of the air...But God...made us alive in Christ... and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus...”</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The world doesn't understand! 	<p>Jesus: “When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.”</p>	<p>Matthew 13:19</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The weeds and the good wheat co-exist right now 	<p>Jesus: “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.”</p>	<p>Matthew 13:37-39</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God has brought us into his kingdom 	<p>Paul speaking about our God the Father: “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”</p>	<p>Colossians 1:13</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't conform to the world 	<p>Paul: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”</p>	<p>Romans 12:2</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My evil desires vs. being holy 	<p>Peter: “Prepare your minds for action...set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed...do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance...so be HOLY in all you do...”</p>	<p>I Peter 1:15-16</p>